PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

WAR SUFFERERS' RELIEF BULLETIN

"Not to be ministered unto, but to minister"

January, 1946 — Vol. 1, No. 11

Rehabilitation in Bengal

By Wilhelmina Kuyf

The following article, written by Wilhelmina Kuyf, gives a glimpse of the work of rehabilitation in Bengal. The place is the town of Champahati where the Mennonite Central Committee has a small industrial center and a dispensary. Although the famine in Bengal is past its worst aspects, there is still much to be done in the way of giving medical attention and helping the natives to get started in self-supporting enterprises. Sister Kuyf was helping in this work while awaiting permission to enter China. She has since received the proper authorization and is now in China.—Editor

It is sometimes a prosaic business to deal with the figures and accounts connected with any relief project, but one can often get glimpses that make the figures come alive. Let's go out to Champahati for one such glimpse. The town itself is near the railroad, and a forty-five minute train ride covers the fifteen miles from Calcutta. The walk from the station to the projects takes us through the bazaar and out on Main street. We turn in at the familiar arch of bamboo, topped with the MCC emblem, and are welcomed by F. Biswas, the pastor in charge of the project. We go on to a long low building of neat bamboo and thatch construction and here we find little boys, and some women, spinning cotton into thread. Eleven looms are set up, and two experienced weavers serve as teachers. Dhotis (men's garments), saris (women's garments), shirting, towels and yard goods are turned out. A number of those who have learned to weave here have set up looms in their own village homes. Widows can thus continue to look after their families, while a man can take care of his fields and work at his loom in the off seasons. Cloth is still very scarce, and weaving is a good occupation.

Wages here at the center are paid partly in rice and partly in money, and it is interesting to see the distribution of the rice. Sacks, part of the sari, tin cans, almost anything will do to take home the precious grain. Rice with dal (lentils—which supply the needed proteins) make up most of the diet. There must always be rice, according to the Bengali people.

Interesting as it is to watch the weaving and the teaching, there is more to see. A big garden in the back supplies work for a few old women besides one man-of-all-work, and the surplus vegetables are eagerly purchased by neighbors.

In another bamboo and thatch building women, mostly young widows, are husking paddy, that is, rice. This, simple as it is, involves a number of processes—washing, steaming, drying, sorting, sifting — and they are carried on to an accompaniment of cheerful chatter. Here, at times, jute making and salt manufacturing go on.

The Dispensary

After saying our "Salaams" all around, we go up the road ten minutes' walk, and arrive at the small brick house which serves as the dispensary as well as the home of Dr. and Mrs. Radhika Ranjon Karmaker. He is a well-trained physician and his wife a graduate nurse. Together they deal with the patients who come with malaria, dysentery, scabies, dyspepsia, sore eyes and many other ills, and dispense the necessary drugs. They have one helper. Each month the total number of pa-

tient visits increases until now it is almost three thousand. Moslems, Hindus, Christians—all alike—come to the dispensary which bears over its gateway the MCC symbol of the Cross of Christ, and the hands clasped in friendship.

We take the train to go toward Calcutta but stop at the busy railroad junction of Sonarpur which means the "village of goldsmiths." Here is the centre where Joseph Eleazer, a Punjabi Christian who has been baptized at the hands of Sadhu Sundar Singh, is in charge of operations. He is intensely interested in people and puts his homeopathic training to account in treating the patients who come to him. He uses the modern sulfa drugs, quinine and atabrine. Here too, there is rice distribution, some free, some at reduced price.

Clothing and Food Distribution

India is a warm country, but for a few months here the night temperatures go down to around forty degrees and that is cold to people with no extra clothing, and who are not well fed. We see them in the morning and evening, trying to keep their ears and whole head warm, perhaps on the theory that if the brain is warm the whole body will be. The cotton blankets we have been able to purchase after negotiating intricate channels of red tape have been distributed and "thank offerings" for them have come in. We have found that things given outright have not the same value as those which cost something. There is some stock of children's clothing too, but no saris or dhotis.

Both Champahati and Sonarpur maintain "milk canteens" at out-stations. Here daily, come something under a hundred children (the Indian Red Cross, who supply the milk, suggest the limit of one hundred) who need the building up that whole milk supplies. Children of all ages, in all states of dress and with cups as varied as themselves, appear at the canteen. Some of the youngsters are shy, some a bit bolder, but all are numbered among those for whom Christ died, and it is in His name that this work goes on.

As we go back to Calcutta we think over the whole program again—house-building, loans, teaching of crafts, the ministry of healing, clothing and milk distribution—and we realize that it is but part of the succession of deeds which prove the faith of our Christian Churches at home.

Notes from the Field

England.—Among the big events of last month was the loading of two trucks for Holland and France. There are many things besides food that are needed by people who have lost everything. There must be sewing machines, crockery, cooking utensils, brooms, beds, nails, etc. A large quantity of medicine and disinfectants, carefully selected by nurse Edna Hunsperger, were also taken along for the children of the city of Chalon. Many people, among them the mayor, expressed their appreciation for this help. What with getting the trucks ready, loading them and arranging for the convoys, the time passed only too quickly, and before we knew it the eighth of December had arrived, and with it the hour of departure. As we threaded our way through Piccadilly and Trafalgar Square, thankfulness filled our hearts that we have people at home and a Father above who make this work possible.—Cornelius Dyck.

Preparation for Work in Ethiopia.—It is really a blessing to be able to live with these Sudan Interior Mission folks. The atmosphere is exactly opposite to that of the past year. I thank God many times for this "schooling" before we enter upon further duties. Language study is keeping me occupied. It is a new thing to try to "explode" sounds when you say them. I can write the alphabet now. There are six girls in the class. The people of Ethiopia seem very eager to learn and I am more anxious every day for our work to begin. The task looms large, but with God all things are possible. Do remember us in prayer.—Nancy Hernley.

What Now in Puerto Rico?—"What now" is the question we ask as those of us who are a part of the work here face the future of our postwar work. The longer one lives here the more complex the problems of Puerto Rico seem to become. We see the economic struggle of our many Puerto Rican friends. We see the tremendous needs in sanitation and health. We are brought face to face again and again with educational and spiritual needs of many whose vision in life is not only dimmed, but has gone out. With the help of God we are seeking for an answer to the question, "What now?"—Harry E. Martins.

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Thinking about Relief

"For all they did cast in of their abundance ("surplus"—Moffatt); **but she of her want hath cast in all that she had, even all her living."**—Mark 12:44.

This statement was made by our Lord concerning a certain poor widow whom he observed dropping two small coins into the offering box. They were only small coins, worth about one-eighth cent apiece, yet they were large enough in the eyes of the Master to draw from Him a most loving commendation for the giver. The size of the gift was of little concern to Christ; it was the spirit of sacrifice which accompanied the gift that made it great. These two coins were the last she had—in fact, all her living; but with no anxiety about her sustenance and with complete trust in Him whom she was serving with her gift, she put all she had into the offerings of God.

Oh that we could have that same implicit trust in the Lord and make such sacrifices as this poor widow. We are so inclined to give only of our surplus; the blessing really begins when we give of the things we need or could well use ourselves; it is not sacrifice until then.

We have a modern example of this in a recent action of the Czechoslovak government which made available to UNRRA two thousand tons of sugar to help supply the needs of her neighbors. In spite of her own critical situation—lack of food, clothing and medicines, she can still think of peoples in more desperate circumstances and make sacrifices to help them out.

To continue this thought we wish to share with our readers a letter from S. J. Goering, General Director of relief in Northwestern Europe.

Reflections

I am writing these lines at Basel in "Beautiful Switzerland." Surrounded by nations that during the past few years were engaged in a terrible war, this little country may well be called an "Isle of Peace." Just across the Rhine from here lies Germany. Germany, once a powerful nation, placed its trust in the sword and now lies in ruin. Switzerland chose the way of peace and its buildings and industries today are intact. Symbolic of the spirit of the two nations are their greetings; the one said, "Heil Hitler" and has fallen; the other says, "Gruesst Gott" and stands.

Although the Swiss had no direct part in the war and its terrible destruction of lives and property, they are doing what they can to help build up again. Clothing and other supplies are being sent out for relief to other countries. Recently by special permission our large truck from France came to Switzerland for a load of supplies, consisting mostly of clothing and bedding, contributed by Swiss Mennonites and their friends for relief in France. It was a real joy to see our own brethren, Fretz and Toews, leave here with the goods. Switzerland, still eating black bread, shares with others, and thus enters into the suffering of its war-torn neighbors. One evening when Brother C. F. Klassen had given a brief report of sad conditions that he found among the displaced Mennonites in Germany, Holland, and Denmark, opportunity to ask questions was given. The first question asked by the Swiss Mennonite Brethren to whom he spoke was, "What can we do to help?" We are happy that we can work together with these people.

I want to wish all of you who will read these lines a Happy New Year. This year will bring added opportunities to share with others the spiritual and material blessings that God has given us. In a day like the one in which we are living, we need to examine ourselves like Job did when he said, "If I . . . have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; . . . if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep . . . . then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone." May God grant all of us the joy of sharing gladly the blessings He has given us.—S. J. Goering.

Holland faces a tremendous reconstruction task. At least 90,000 houses were destroyed during the five years of the Nazi occupation and in the furious fighting which raged over the country in 1940 and 1945. About 250,000 more houses were badly damaged, while an additional 290,000 suffered badly from ruinous inundations. At present there is a severe shortage of building materials and supplies. (WP)

Experiences in Distribution

Holland

During the first two weeks here in Amsterdam the people served were largely of the Doopsgezinde Gemeente (Mennonite Church) whose ministers submitted to us forms prepared by us on which were listed the various articles of clothing needed by individuals. Then on scheduled days and at a specified hour they came to be fitted. Everybody wanted shoes and most of the people really needed them. The sad thing was we didn't have enough shoes to go around, as many of our shoes were in small sizes and a large percentage of these Dutch people require very large sizes of clothing. Add to this the fact that the woolen socks which they wear have been darned or patched so often that they have become quite bulky and you may readily understand that a large size of shoe would be required. Most of these people have only one pair of badly worn shoes to be worn for all occasions and many have to resort to the wearing of wooden shoes or "klompen." The situation is not much better as far as other types of clothing are concerned. Coats and other articles were often borrowed, shirts were frayed at the neck and sleeves or were several sizes too small, underclothing was practically nondescript, mittens and caps were scarce. With all of our types of clothing combined we were able to make most persons very happy even though there were instances when we could not supply the exact article for the individual.

Our greatest pleasure came during our third week of clothing distribution when we supplied children from various children's homes. We took care of about three hundred such children and to see the gleam in the eyes of a child—especially as he puts on a pair of brand new shoes—is compensation itself.—Lulu Smith

France

Relief workers in Europe today are experiencing that thrill and satisfaction that accompanies the giving out of food and clothing given so sacrificially by Christian people in the States and Canada.

While unpacking clothing yesterday I found labels with my own handwriting. This morning Vernon Toews from Manitoba, who is now a relief worker in France, walked into the room where I was working. Suddenly he said, "There is my suit that I gave for relief when I was still at home." Yes, the full three-piece suit with the Eaton Store label on the inside of the coat was there. It is difficult to explain the feeling that comes to one as one has these experiences. It is a great satisfaction to see clothing go out daily in smaller and larger lots to such needy people.

One hundred and fifty pairs of shoes and five large boxes of clothing were packed for the Alsace-Lorraine sector where there is great need. These were intended to supply the need of Mennonite families who had become destitute during the war, and also for distribution to non-Mennonites by Mennonite committees in that sector.

The spirit in which the above gifts are given and distributed means much in impressing the needy recipients with the spirit of Christ. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . , ye have done it unto me."—Mrs. M. C. Lehman

Notes of Thanks

Following are translations of several letters from war victims in Holland who have received clothing from Mennonite relief workers; this relief material is gotten into Holland through H.A.R.K., a Dutch Red Cross relief agency—thus the allusions to the Red Cross.

"I herewith express also in the name of my wife my heartfelt thanks for the goods we received from America through you. Will you be so kind as to thank the American Committee most cordially in our name? With many greetings!"—Signature.

"Dear Committee: I am very glad with my nightgown. I thank you for this present. At home they thought it very nice, too. I thank you once again."—Signature.

"The undersigned expresses in the name of all his family by means of this letter his heartfelt thanks for the garments they could receive through the Red Cross. Once more our most cordial thanks!"—Signature.

"Dear Committee: I thank you very much for the nice knickers which I received through the intermediary of the Red Cross. My parents were very glad and I above all."—Signature.

The righteous considereth the cause of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it. Proverbs 29:7

Mennonite Relief at Itacurubi

Until recently Mennonite relief efforts in Paraguay have been directed primarily to help the Mennonite refugees located there. Beginning in May, 1945, a school feeding program at Itacurubi del Rosario was conducted for six months. This represents an M.C.C. relief project whose direct beneficiaries are natives of Paraguay. Betty Keeney of Penncraft, Pennsylvania, has organized and directed the supplemental school feeding with a resourcefulness and enthusiasm which has won warm comment from both private and government sources in Paraguay. The following article describes the nature and aims of this new program.—Editor

Itacurubi, that magic sounding word, is the name of a pueblo, numbering approximately 8,000 people in town and surrounding area, and is situated four miles from the Friesland Mennonite Colony in Paraguay. In the Itacurubi school of 325 children the Mennonite Central Committee has conducted a child feeding project. Two reasons prompted this project: (1) A need for supplementary feeding of undernourished children. In a preliminary survey it was found that 75% of the students were underweight and that there was evidence of poor bone structure and many cases of decayed teeth. Most of the children come from extremely poor homes where the diet is very inadequate. Many students live in the campo at a great distance from the school and must leave their homes early in the morning, spend four hours in school and then walk home—perhaps having only a hard baked galleta on which to nibble. (2) The MCC had a desire to do something for Paraguay in appreciation to the Paraguayan government for permitting Russian refugee Mennonites to settle in their country; to live in Paraguay without military obligations.

The schoolhouse at Itacurubi is a palm tree frame, mud plastered structure with brick floor, barred windows and a thatched roof. When it is cold the only light and ventilation in the room must enter through cracks in closed door and shuttered windows. The class room facilities consist of clumsy wooden desks for two or three, board painted black, a few faded pictures and none of the teaching aids. Slates are used because of lack of paper, and the supply of books is very limited. The learning method is by rote memory. Teachers shout at their students and pupils answer in unison with loud, high pitched voices. Some days it sounds like a noisy ward in a mental hospital. But somehow they do learn to read and write and memorize historical and geographical facts.

In April the facilities for beginning a feeding project were nil. The men from the colony soon replaced the 5 ft. by 5 ft. enclosure with a kitchen large enough to contain a four foot cupboard, three tables and a mud covered brick stove. Large kettles, dishpans, draining pans, teakettles, pitchers and milk cans were purchased in Asuncion. Other equipment including cupboards, tables, bread forms, mixing bowls, water buckets and hand washing tanks were made by the Friesland colonists.

May 2, 1945, inaugurated the first day of feeding with the giving of a large slice of buttered brown bread and a cup of milk to each child. Up to November 2, the amount of food distributed was 1,816 gallons of milk (170 gallons powdered), 554 pounds of butter, 1,090 twelve inch loaves of bread and 27 pounds of cheese.

The milk is bought from the Friesland Co-operative and to assure safety against disease is boiled for one half hour at 75 degrees centigrade. The supply of fresh milk is low during the winter months due to cool weather and lack of good pasture land. This meant milk for the boys in the afternoon session but none for the girls in the morning. The survey showed the need to be greater among the girls since 85% were underweight whereas 68% of the boys were underweight. Other nutrition studies have shown that calcium is the nutrient most lacking in the Paraguayan diet. Hence, powdered milk and some cheese were served to the girls in the morning feeding. The cheese was secured from the Fernheim Colony in the Chaco. Butter is made in Friesland and the bread is baked in an outdoor oven by one of the colony women.

Twice a day wagons bring milk, bread and butter to Itacurubi. Students pour the milk, spread butter on the bread, serve, build the fire, fill water tanks, wash cups and clean the kitchen. After hand washing, the children file past the tables, receive the food, and while eating stand in line under the trees or in the sun, according to the weather. One of the first problems was to get each child to drink all of his milk and eat all of the slice of bread. People do not like food to which they are unaccustomed. Many of these children had never eaten bread nor butter before

and seldom had milk to drink. But since the feeding project they have developed a liking for these essential foods. The director of the school told the inspector of schools that illness was less prevalent this year at Itacurubi than at schools in the surrounding region. The directors, teachers and students have been very cooperative in promoting the feeding program.

The President of Paraguay, Higinio Mroinigo, and five cabinet ministers including the Minister of Education, visited the project in October. Realizing the benefit to Paraguayan children, their words were of high commendation for the project.

Due to the project, other desirable results have been noted. There is evidence of increased demand for colony products. Wagon drivers are asked to bring butter, eggs, milk, flour and cheese to sell in the pueblo. Many people have expressed desire to have colony-made project equipment in their own homes. It is hoped that trade relations will continue to improve, creating a higher standard of living in both colony and Itacurubi.

People in Itacurubi have said, "The United States and Paraguay are good friends, **aren't they?"** Hasten the day when the countries of the world will be without this reserved question. The time must come when throughout South America and the other continents, Christian love will be the cementing influence rather than forced political and economic friendships. God help us to bring the day when, without reservation it can be said, **"We are** good friends, the United States and Paraguay."—Betty Keeney

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Relief workers with UNRRA in Germany have discovered that the Nazis, during their wartime dictatorship, permitted Rudolf Cohen, a Jewish Quaker in Munich, to carry on relief work for Allied war prisoners when it was demonstrated that similar work was going on in countries fighting against the Axis. (WP)

For each million persons in India who died of starvation in the past eighteen months, there are 12,000,000 who did not quite die, according to the Famine Relief Committee, Inc. These are now dying by tens of thousands in epidemics. They need to get treated with special foods and vitamins to be protected against disease.

—Gospel Messenger

My First Month in Belgium

The M.C.C. now has three workers in Belgium. Most of their service is with the Prisoner of War Y.M.C.A. work at Brussels, giving spiritual help and other ministration to the men in the Prisoner of War camps throughout Belgium, as seen by Delmar Wedel after one month in that field.—Editor

To be sure Europe is bleeding, but in this part of the continent the wounds are, in the main, spiritual rather than physical. Here in Belgium, with the exception of isolated pockets of need, the physical necessities of life are being met. There is need of course, but in comparison to other areas of Europe, Belgium is not suffering. Quite another story are the conditions in Germany. The reports that dribble in from Germany are frightful—refugees and displaced persons streaming into Germany—cities that look like so many smashed cracker boxes—large scale hunger, and so on and on. Though the economy of Belgium has recovered more rapidly than that of most European countries, this does not mean there is no need for special phases of relief work.

At the present time there are four of us field secretaries who attempt to make life more endurable for nearly 300,000 prisoners of war. Our concerns in the camps are primarily the religious and educational needs of the prisoners and to help them with constructive leisure-time activities. It is important to keep the hands and minds of these men active, and to keep the spirits refreshed with the living waters of Christian religion. Two weeks ago it was my unusual opportunity to be a prisoner of war. Only a few days ago I emerged from a "PW" camp "somewhere in Belgium," after ten days of voluntary imprisonment. Even within that short time of imprisonment it was a grand feeling to escape from the depressing environment of a camp surrounded with its hostile barbed wire enclosure, to the outer world of bright lights and freedom. For ten days I shared the experiences of the prisoners, so that I might better understand some of their problems. I also entered the camp to improve my German speaking ability. It is a great privilege to be working with the prisoners. It is a humbling experience, however, when one realizes how great is their need and how little we can do for them.—Delmar Wedel

Peace Notes

Voluntary Service

As Civilian Public Service enters its closing chapter as an alternative service program, there is increasing interest in inaugurating some kind of voluntary service program in underprivileged and distress areas as a demonstration of our Christian witness. Several possible fields where some such programs could be carried out are mental hospital work and hookworm control such as is being done in several C.P.S. units in the South. We are presenting for your thoughtful consideration the following article by a member of the C.P.S. Unit at the Greystone Park Hospital.—Editor

For two principal reasons I heartily endorse a church-sponsored peacetime voluntary service program: (1) For the preservation of nonresistance. I see in such a program of work, study, and fellowship a most conducive atmosphere in which to assimilate this tenet of the Mennonite faith. But even more than that, I see it very probably as the **only** means by which Mennonite nonresistance may be kept alive. Witness the number of men during this war who could not conscientiously refuse military service. Those churches still enjoying strong church fidelity and an "in-group" relationship have most effectively preserved their heritage. Those which are losing one or both have all but sacrificed their nonresistant faith. We must head off this disturbing trend among Mennonites if we are to retain one of the few remaining doctrinal pillars of our heritage. I propose that a voluntary service program can serve most effectively in this capacity.

(2) To provide a service alternative in the event of another emergency. One of the grave ills growing out of the CPS experience has been the pain of conscripted service and government control in administration. The present service program, hailed often as a victory for conscientious objectors in this war, must not represent the final accomplishment. It should, however, be a step toward further freedom of conscience and witness. I see only in a completely voluntary service program the means of eliminating the evils of compulsion and state interference.

Therefore, I propose that the church continue to operate certain of its significant CPS projects using entirely voluntary help. Young people should be encouraged to give a year, a few months, or a summer in some church-sponsored work project concerned with human betterment. After 5, 10, 15, 20, or more years of such activity, we may prove ourselves and the sincerity of our conviction that we have chosen the really constructive method. In the event of a future world conflict we can then point to our peacetime service program as conclusive evidence that the church is able to administer a wartime service which needs neither conscripted help nor government interference. Before another conscription act is forced upon the American people, we must lay the groundwork for the next step—complete exemption from any form of compulsory service. We need to prove ourselves now!—Wilton E. Hartzler, Greystone Park unit.

MCC Continues Administration of CPS

One question of increasing pertinence during the recent months has been "Shall the Church withdraw from CPS administration?" The Friends have answered this question in the affirmative, and it is now clear that Selective Service will be taking over their camps so that by March 2 the men now in Friends camps and units will be in camps operated by Selective Service. The Brethren Service Committee has officially gone on record to continue CPS administration.

The Mennonite Central Committee entered CPS because the Mennonite and affiliated churches wanted some kind of alternative service program in which the church could follow its drafted men and minister to them. Although the present setup is far from being perfect, the churches are able to provide such ministry, and there is no indication that the churches wish to discontinue this ministration. Furthermore, this alternative service was generally of a constructive nature and never in any way directly connected with the military effort. In view of these two principles, which were the basic reasons for the MCC to enter CPS it was decided by the Committee at its annual meeting, December 28 and 29, 1945, to continue the administration of Civilian Public Service as long as our churches wish to continue their work of ministry to their drafted men.

We are rich only through what we give; and poor only through what we refuse and keep. —Mad. Swetchine

M.C.C. Relief Workers

Following is a list of the Mennonite Relief Units with the address of the center and the number of workers. This list is drawn up as of December 31, 1945.

PARAGUAY 9

364 Eligio Ayala
Asuncion, Paraguay
South America

PUERTO RICO 37

Mennonite Sub-Unit
LaPlata Project
Aibonito, Puerto Rico

EGYPT 4

% UNRRA
8 Dar el Shifa
Garden City
Cairo, Egypt

ITALY 5

UNRRA Italian Mission
APO 394
c-o Postmaster
New York City, New York

ETHIOPIA 6

c-o Imperial Hotel
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia, Africa

INDIA 8

c-o Lee Memorial Mission
13 Wellington Square
Calcutta, India

ENGLAND 10

68 Shepherds Hill
London, N. 6
England

FRANCE 14

Secours Mennonite aux Enfants
11 Impasse de la Tranchee
Chalon-sur-Saone (S.-et-L.)

BELGIUM 3

c-o World's Alliance YMCA,
230 Rue Royal,
Brussels

HOLLAND 3

Singel 452
Amsterdam
Holland

CHINA 2

c-o American Advisory Com.
148 Chung Sze Road
Chungking, China

SWITZERLAND 2

c-o Baslerhof Hotel
Basel
Switzerland

TOTAL MCC WORKERS 109